

Memorandum

To: Idaho Water Resource Board
From: Mackenzie Kienholz
Date: April 29, 2026
Re: Environmental Resources Technical Working Group Meeting Report – Meeting #16



REQUIRED ACTION: None

Background

The Environmental Resources Technical Working Group (ERTWG) is established to study and discuss the potential impacts of Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer (ESPA) planned recharge activities on aquatic, wildlife, recreational resources, and on water quality, of the ESPA, Snake River and tributary water bodies. The working group may recommend actions to be undertaken by the Idaho Water Resource Board (IWRB) to minimize and/or mitigate the potential impacts of managed ESPA recharge activities.

The working group is convened at least twice annually, to consider:

- impacts of past recharge activities on ESPA and Snake River aquatic, wildlife and recreational resources, and on water quality;
- whether additional information should be gathered, to better understand the potential impacts of past and/or future recharge activities on ESPA, Snake River and tributary water resources;
- whether protocols for managed recharge activities should be recommended to the IWRB, to ensure potential impacts of recharge activities on water resources are adequately considered, including potential impacts on ESPA discharges and Snake River flows necessary to support aquatic species and maintain aquatic and riparian habitats.

A steering committee was established for the working group, to develop a governance structure for the working group. In the summer of 2022, the steering committee determined that a meeting report should be drafted following the conclusion of regularly scheduled working group meetings. The written working group meeting report would be provided to the IWRB, to inform the Board of the findings of the working group. This report summarizes the discussions of the working group meeting held April 29, 2026.

Attendees

The following is a list of the individuals who attended the meeting:

Individual	Association	Representation
Mackenzie Kienholz	IDWR	Idaho Water Resource Board
Max Deckman	IDWR	Idaho Water Resource Board
Matt Anders	IDWR	Idaho Water Resource Board
Kathryn Elliott	IDEQ	Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
Kaelyn Lagerwall	IDEQ	Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

Kim Roush	IDEQ	Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
Nicholas Howell	IDEQ	Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
Steve Brink	IPC	Idaho Power Co.
Abby Bitzenburg	Parsons Behle & Latimer	Surface Water Coalition
Rob Van Kirk	HFF	Henry's Fork Foundation
Megan Satterwhite	IDA	Idaho Dairymen's Assn.
Alyssa Bangs	USFW	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Alan Hansten	NSCC	North Side Canal Co.

Meeting Minutes

1. Mackenzie Kienholz (IDWR) started the meeting at 2:00 p.m. by introducing the attendees in person at the Idaho Water Resource Center in Boise, ID, IDWR staff Max Deckman and Matt Anders. Max then listed all attendees online, having them state their name and affiliation.
2. Mackenzie provided an update on the fall 2025 to spring 2026 Idaho Water Resource Board (IWRB) managed aquifer recharge operations including locations, flow rates, and total volumes of IWRB accomplished recharge. Mackenzie noted that approximately 38,000 acre-feet of water was not diverted for recharge over the winter and instead allowed to flow past Milner Dam in accordance with an agreement with IPC. She also noted that due the 2025-2026 recharge season's impact on the IWRB's annual average for recharge, no bypass will occur next winter. Finally, she noted that no additional recharge is expected to occur until fall 2026.
3. Mackenzie then presented an overview of the IWRB's recharge water rights beginning with how the rates allowed under the IWRB's water rights are greater than the current IWRB recharge infrastructure capacity. She discussed the IWRB's goal of adding additional off-canal capacity, specifically in the Upper Valley, but how this would take several years to be realized. Mackenzie showed a map of IWRB recharge points of diversion and places of use.
4. Mackenzie described when IWRB recharge water rights can be used. She also showed maps comparing where recharge occurred in a low water year (2025-2026 season) compared to a high water year (2017-2018 season). Mackenzie used the 2017-2018 map to explain that while more capacity will hopefully be added in the coming years, the general locations where the IWRB completes recharge are not anticipated to change significantly.
5. Kim Roush (IDEQ) inquired as to whether the 2017-2018 map shown represented only approved sites or whether it included pilot projects. Mackenzie answered that this was actual diversion data from the 2017-2018 season, so it only shows the locations that were operational at that time.
6. Rob Van Kirk inquired about an IWRB water application that has not yet been permitted, and whether there were plans to move forward with the permitting process. Mackenzie answered that the IWRB's water permits will be up for review in 2027-2028, and that it is likely that the application would be discussed at that time. However, Mackenzie stated that there are no known plans to move forward with the application at this time and that the decision whether to do so will be up to the IWRB.
7. Mackenzie finished her presentation by showing a map of recharge sites and their status. She also showed the link to the web page where this map and descriptions of the recharge sites that have been approved by the IWRB can be found. She noted that one additional

project will be proposed at the IWRB meetings in May, and that more will likely be proposed at IWRB meetings later in the year.

8. Mackenzie asked whether there were new items for discussion. Kim Roush (IDEQ) suggested a cursory overview of the ESPAM model updates. Mackenzie agreed that this would be a helpful discussion, but that ERTWG may not be the proper forum. Mackenzie stated that she can work with the IDWR model team to determine the appropriate forum for this discussion.
9. Mackenzie concluded the meeting by announcing that the next regularly scheduled ERTWG meeting will be held on October 28, 2026.